

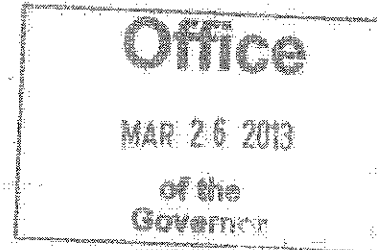


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Office of the Mayor  
Michael F. Brennan

March 22, 2013

The Honorable Janet Mills  
State of Maine Attorney General  
6 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333



To Madam Attorney General,

Last year, the Maine Charter School Commission granted the *Baxter Academy for Technology and Science* approval to commence operation as a charter school beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. Recent changes to the management of the Portland-based charter school have raised serious questions about its viability as well as concerns over the application process and subsequent approval granted by the Maine Charter School Commission.

On account of these developments, I am formally requesting that you conduct a review of the following:

- Has Baxter Academy experienced financial mismanagement as alleged by its Board of Directors;
- Did the Maine Charter School Commission conduct an appropriate review of the Academy's financial situation when it submitted its application, and
- What was the extent of the advice or assistance provided by members of the Commission to the Academy staff while their application was under its review? Was this advice or assistance inappropriate?

Furthermore, I am asking you to immediately suspend contract negotiations with Baxter Academy until the review has been completed and request that students who have applied to the school be notified that the school is under review by your Office.

Along with this review, I am requesting that your office outline the process for filing a formal appeal of the Maine Charter School Commission decision to grant a charter to Baxter Academy.

Finally, I am requesting the Superintendent of the Portland School System to withhold any payments of Portland tax payer funds to Baxter Academy until this review is completed and any subsequent appeal has been concluded.

As Mayor of Portland, I have an obligation to ensure that funds collected by the city are spent appropriately and I have a deep interest in making sure that all Portland students receive a high-quality education in a stable and predictable setting. I am sure you agree that no student should find him/herself without a school in the middle of year simply because the body charged with overseeing its operations did not live up to the task. Evidence of mismanagement or an insufficient application review should necessitate action.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael Brennan, Mayor

Cc:

Governor Paul LePage  
Senate President Justin Alford  
Senate Majority Leader Seth Goodall  
Senate Assistant Majority Leader Troy Jackson  
Senate Minority Leader Michael Thibodeau  
Senate Assistant Minority Leader Roger Katz  
Speaker of the House Mark Eves  
House Majority Leader Seth Berry  
House Assistant Majority Leader Jeff McCabe  
House Minority Leader Kenneth Fredette  
House Assistant Minority Leader Alexander Willette  
The Portland City Council  
Portland School Board  
Portland City Manager Mark Rees  
Portland Corporation Counsel Danielle West-Chuhta  
Portland Superintendent Emmanuel Caulk